

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed December 23, 2003, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter the above amendments and consider the following remarks. Unless expressly stated otherwise, the amendments and remarks made herein are irrelevant to any claims that have already been allowed or issued in this patent family (including the present application). Unless expressly stated otherwise, the amendments and remarks made herein are also irrelevant to any claims in this patent family (including the present application) that the Examiner has previously indicated contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 1-5 have been canceled without prejudice in order to expedite the allowance of this case. Furthermore, claims 6-8 have been canceled without prejudice and rewritten as independent claims 21, 28, and 32 as suggested by the Examiner, and new dependent claims 22-27, 29-31, and 33-35 have been added in support of the new independent claims. As a result, claims 9-35 are still pending in the application. The requisite fees are submitted herewith for the additional claims. The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and accompanying remarks.

Rejection of Claims 1-5 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kolla et al. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, due to the allowable subject matter of claims 6-20 as recognized by the Examiner, the Applicant

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has opted to not pursue claims 1-5 in order to expedite the allowance of this case. Therefore, claims 1-5 have been canceled without prejudice, and the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) has been obviated. The Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 1-5 in a continuation application.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 9-20. The Applicant also appreciates that the Examiner has indicated that claims 6-8 contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly, the Applicant has canceled claims 6-8 without prejudice and rewritten them in independent form as new claims 21, 28, and 32. The Applicant has also added dependent claims 22-27, 29-31, and 33-35. The fees are submitted herewith for the two extra independent claims and the seven extra total claims.

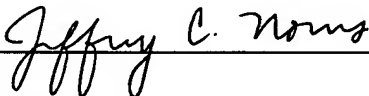
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Conclusion

The Applicant has canceled claims 1-8 without prejudice. The Applicant has also added new claims 21-35, which incorporate the allowable subject matter as previously indicated by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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